

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 37111 211500Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 HA-05 /109 W
-----115983 211504Z /47

P R 211442Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3390
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
USMISSION USUN
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 37111

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, AG, SS, FR
SUBJECT: ALLEGED FRENCH ATTACK ON POLISARIO FORCES

REF: ALGIERS 3166

1. ON DECEMBER 18 FRENCH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD)
REFUSED TO CONFIRM OR DENY FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN
AN AIR ATTACK ON POLISARIO FORCES DECEMBER 14-15, AS
ALLEGED BY POLISARIO. ON DECEMBER 19, MOD ADDED A
CLARIFICATION TO EFFECT THAT WEAPONS SUCH AS NAPALM
WHICH HAD ALLEGEDLY BEEN USED IN ATTACK ON POLISARIO,
ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO FRENCH FORCES OUTSIDE OF FRANCE.
ALSO ON DECEMBER 19, QUAI ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE STATING
THAT ATTACK DESCRIBED BY POLISARIO COULD ONLY BE THE
RAID WHICH ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE ON DECEMBER 12, "INSIDE
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MAURITANIAN FRONTIERS" WHEN A POLISARIO ATTACK ON
THE NOUADHIBOU-ZOUERATE RAILROAD FAILED. QUAI
STATEMENT ADDED THAT FRENCH AIR FORCES WERE CAPABLE
OF INTERVENING TO ASSURE THE SECURITY OF
FRENCHMEN IN MAURITANIA, AND ON REQUEST OF THE MAURITAN-
IAN GOVERNMENT.

2. WE ASKED QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
FRANCOPHONE AFRICA (DE LA ROCHERE) WHAT LAY BEHIND THESE
DECLARATIONS. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN AN AIR ATTACK
DECEMBER 12-13 ON POLISARIO UNITS WHICH HAD ATTACKED
NOUADHIBOU-ZOUERATE RAILROAD, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO
ATTACK ON OR AFTER DECEMBER 14. HE SAID MUCH OF THE
INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE POLISARIO ANNOUNCEMENT
PERTAINING TO LOSSES SUSTAINED BY THE POLISARIO WAS
CORRECT, BUT RELATED TO RAIDS ON DECEMBER 12-13.
DE LA ROCHERE SAID MAURITANIANS HAD STATED PUBLICLY
THAT DECEMBER 12-13 AIR RAID WAS BY MAURITANIAN AIR
FORCES ONLY, AND IT WAS UP TO THEM TO SAY WHAT ACTUALLY
HAPPENED. DE LA ROCHERE SAID THAT IN THIS SITUATION
THE FRENCH COULD NOT CONFIRM OR DENY THEIR OWN
PARTICIPATION IN THE RAID. "YOU UNDERSTAND", SAID
DE LA ROCHERE "I CANNOT CONFIRM TO YOU THAT FRENCH
UNITS PARTICIPATED."
NOFORN COMMENT: WE GAINED STRONG IMPRESSION THAT
DE LA ROCHERE WAS CONVEYING TO US THE FACT THAT
FRENCH UNITS ACTUALLY DID PARTICIPATE IN THE AIR
RAID. END NOFORN COMMENT.
DE LA ROCHERE ADDED THAT THE POLISARIO WAS OBVIOUSLY
TRYING TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF THE RAID
BY CLAIMING IT TOOK PLACE AFTER DECEMBER 14, THE
DATE ON WHICH THEY ANNOUNCED RELEASE OF FRENCH
HOSTAGES.
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HARTMAN

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